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The Labyrinthine Ways

THE LAUREL AND THE POPPY. By Margaret Gillett and Monika Kehoe. Copp Clark; 313 pages, $7.50.

FRANCIS THOMPSON was a poet whose genius, among writers in English, was surpassed only by that of Shakespeare — if at all—in the opinion of many. His poetry rings with beauty and nobility, divine insight and human shyness, as well. It reflects a grandeur of soul that must have led many to envision a grandeur of personality.

The fact, of course, is that Thompson was a misfit who couldn't hold a job, a weakling who found courage and even sustenance in laudanum, a stumblebum. In many respects he was like the French tramp-saint, Benoit Joseph Labre. Like Labre he flunked out of seminary. Like Labre he was deeply religious. But whereas the Frenchman spent his relatively short life tramping from one Italian shrine to another in a perpetual pilgrimage, Thompson spent his largely in a pilgrimage of chemists' shops to keep his supply of laudanum intact, and writing poetry on bits of wrapping paper with stubs of pencils.

The life of this pitiful wreck of a man who was able to attain such heights of beauty comes to life in this novel by a couple of Montreal professors — Dr. Kehoe is professor of English and chairman of the Department of Applied Linguistics at Marianopolis while Dr. Gillett is professor of education at McGill, where she was founding editor of the McGill Journal of Education.

Thompson's career lends itself better to the semi-fictional approach than to straight biography, at least at the hands of these authors who have managed to give reality and color to each phase of the poet's life. The distress of the "Spoiled priest" who couldn't make the grade in seminary — not for lack of scholarship or spirituality so much as a failure to ever be on time or to settle into any sort of an orderly routine — is presented with sympathy, with insight into the mind of a failure. The next failure — to follow his father into a medical career, partly through disinterest and partly through a horror of the surgery — is easier to understand. The addiction to laundanum, developed after using it as a remedy and as a result of Thompson's life-long feeling of kinship with Thomas De Quincey whose Confessions of an Opium Eater was cherished as dearly as his Roman Catholic missal.

The story is told with skill and dramatic effectiveness. It is so well told that it will be surprising if it doesn't find its way into movies. It's got all the elements of a great movie. But don't wait for that. It's eminently worthwhile reading.

LEO MacGILLIVRAY

Generation Gap

THE END OF ME. By Alfred Hayes. McClelland & Stewart; 177 pages, $5.95.

Asher in search of his youth is the theme of this story told with great sensitivity and understanding. Asher, now something past 50, has been living in California and has come to New York to try to re-live the days of his childhood and early manhood. He has left behind him a dwindling literary career and an unfaithful wife.

To assist him in his search, he enlists the help of his young cousin Michael, a poet in the modern style, contemptuous and ruthless. He has acquiesed in Asher's request to join him partly from curiosity, but more likely because the offer of $50 a week is a boon to his perennial impecuniosity. But a hostile atmosphere is soon engendered between the two men, when Asher meets Michael's girl, Aurora, and begins an affair with her. The situation is by no means helped when Michael shows some of his poems to Asher, who intimates that he thinks little of them.

Together, Michael and Aurora lead Asher a merry dance. They have a way of playing games, silly, malicious games that they plan in the sordid attic of the old, dilapidated house Michael calls his studio. Their games confound and mislead Asher. They even succeed in extracting money from him, and they laugh over his discomfiture. Asher knows that they laugh at him; to them, he is a dupe, a foolish old fellow. But the whole unsavory mess goes on until it works up to a climax that even Asher can stand no longer.

Mr. Hayes has written a very subtle story. Ostensibly, it is Asher's search for his youth, but obviously it shows the great gulf that is fixed between the older and the younger generation: a great gulf that cannot be bridged. It is a bitter commentary on the ludicrous attempt of an older man to become young again; to reconcile the attitude of youth with the faded dreams of age; the brownstone front and the discotheque are incompatible; they have no point of contact.

HELEN GUITON.

Science?

THE POLITICS OF PURE SCIENCE. By Daniel S. Greenberg. General Bublishing; 303 pages, $9.95

The impression we laymen have formed of scientists as the high priests of knowledge interested in nothing but worshipping their deity and celebrating Her (or is it His) rites is, according to Mr. Greenberg, an erroneous one. For their religion is not monotheistic, but multiple, and its priesthood not monolithic, but hierarchical, a system which set up inner pressures and tensions, factions, jealousies, feuds, intrigues, and personal spites which vitiate the purity of their vocation.

In short, the scientific community, like any other assemblage of dissimilar human beings, seethes with politics. And, of course, the principal bone of contention is, as always, money — where it goes, who gets, why and how. Mr. Greenberg brings to light the many factors which determine the course pure scientific research takes, the caste system which is a by-product of a brain-proud culture, along with many other sociological phenomena disgorged, like reams of print-out, from the computer age.

MARVIN RABINOVITCH.

Good Ol' Sam

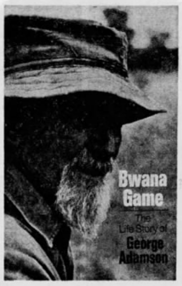
HERMAN HAD TWO DAUGHTERS. By Zelda Popkin. McClelland and Stewart; 382 pages, $8.50.

Sam Rosenbaum, Celia and Jessie Weiss grew up together in the Grady's Mills Jewish ghetto. Theirs was a normal childhood until the First World War, the Depression, and anti-Semitism hit them. As adults, they became involved in various ways — Sam first worked as a reporter and then as a fund raiser for the Jewish cause, Celia and her husband donated funds, and Jessie wrote about the Jewish scene in America.

The story, told by Sam, mostly relates his experiences with Herman Weiss's daughters. Disliking Celia, loving Jessie, he is continually called upon to celebrate and mourn their every achievement and tragedy, whether he is interested or not. Finally breaking the family apron strings and friendship shackles, Sam goes to Europe and amidst all the horror of Hitler and WWII begins to lead a life of his own.

This novel makes interesting reading what with rich Jewish humour and tradition on every page. Interesting also because as the author says: "While the characters and incidents are fiction, the background is anything but".

DARYL McNUTT



Adventuresome Life

BWANA GAME. By George Adamson. Collins; 319 pages, $6.95.

GEORGE ADAMSON is the husband of Joy Adamson, whose decision that Elsa the lioness, being born free, should live free, even though brought up by humans, he helped realize. It would seem that his lifetime of thought has been brought to fruition by the lions, who entered directly under the Adamsons' care as three little cubs. These Lions' adventures and that of their progeny, and film star stand ins, are brought up to date in the last section of the book.

As with many African tales, the chronicle of "Bwana Game" is crammed with high adventure yarns, with fascinating natural history and anthropological details. Adamson's clear, consise style may obfuscate for some, who are used to the garbage — bin narcissisms of contemporary literature, the really new philosophy of mankind's place in the bio-environment.

A very few examples of the tales of adventure and natural history include: goat trading when the transport trucks had wheels and axles of wood, new ones were whittled from the roadside forest. Across the panorama pour migrating tribes, both white and black; border wars, poacher wars, and the building of roads pushed through excessively hostile environments to control the same.

There is an art of crocodile calling, the noise being aid to resemble the piping of the babies. This summons their elders to gether around and eat the young... "a very commendable habit." (For crocodiles) Hyena have quite a complicated family life and go in for a lot of ritual! Elephants appear to recognize the significance of death, and bury their dead (and other dead) when they can. If the dead are elephants, the tusks are ceremonially removed.

The villains in the piece are few, but utter. They are Homo sapiens overbreeding, backward farmers, unenlightened federal governments which permit said farmers to get away with it; and the male-dominated haute couturier industry which promotes the spotted catskin coat fad. These furs are 95% illegal produce from poaching; therefore most of the catskin coats you see are the result of such criminal activity; eating to the extermination of those animal species.

The Adamsons' Ethic will cause howls of protest from the homeocentric, but may well sew seeds leading to really creative thinking. To sum up: (1) It is the duty of man to guard and protect what is at his mercy, in this period of evolution. (2) Destruction of creatures which typify the perfection of ageless development, while spending fortunes on the preservation of dead artifacts, is not justifiable. (3) Animals, never ill-treated, but living independent, remain friendly and trusting towards man. (But mind your manners, of course) (4) Animals are not casual material for experiment. They are living beings with individual characters and personalities. We are under an obligation to care for them. (5) Animals cannot be treated as so much merchandise to provide profit and entertainment for humanity. (6) As animals are living beings akin to ourselves it is worthwhile to see they achieve their (animal) fulfillment, and that methods of rehabilitation be set. (7) Animals in the wild lead hazardous lives; but it is their life. We can befriend and medicate, but not imprison.

M.E. BURNS

Colonial America

THE MUSKET AND THE CROSS. By Walter D. Edmonds. Little, Brown; 514 pages, $10.00.

This is the 11th historical work by Mr. Edmonds, author of the modern classic "Drums Along The Mohawks." Unlike Drums, The Musket and the Cross" is a straight, comprehensive study of the history of development in French and English North America from its earliest days until the fall of Quebec, which surprisingly comes first in the book.

Mr. Edmonds has written on a well-covered subject. Thomas B. Costain in "The White and Gold" gave a lot more detail of the development of French Canada, but not more engagingly. Canada's E. C. Eccles, on the other hand, in such works as "Frontenac: The Courtier Governor" gave details on a smaller part of Canadian history, and wrote engagingly.

Mr. Edmonds' work suffers, undoubtedly of necessity, of being slow-paced in some parts and roaringly exciting in others.

But one asset not attained in many other similar works is that he is able to paint plainly the picture of the reasons for settlement of French and English North America, and the reasons behind the long, long struggles between the two races, which he points out was not entirely based on religion or language. In fact, it was of this basic struggle that the Indian wars were borne.

Where Costain's The White and Gold is confusing in that it jumps in time and makes it up later, there is very little digression from a readable chronology in "The Musket and The Cross."

For a better insight into what made the North American colonies, patro nships and commonwealth's work, it will be hard to find a better, more interesting or clearer one than that provided by Mr. Edmonds.

LARRY McINNIS

Wilde And Others

FEASTING WITH PANTHERS. By Rupert Croft-Cooke. Holt, Rinehart, Winston; 309 pages, $7.50.

Perhaps this work may be summed up thus: Not a feast for the many, but certainly a treat for the few. Towards the end of the book, the author in summing up his duty writes, "But it is the duty of the critic, the biographer or the editor to reveal what he knows, not because these things affect the merit of a work of art but because they are supremely interesting to those who care about the artist and his achievements." If it is the few who care, to whom this book is directed, and I believe it is, the work is an outstanding success.

This book is a revealing study of some brilliant Victorian writers, who by their pervert natures and sexual idiosyncrasies, were able to live surrounded by a bohemian type culture where homosexuality between consulting adults, and also with minors, became an accepted and perhaps elegant way of life for many artists. This type of living produced a merger of these talented men with peasants, sailors and other shady characters.

With a pen which has the effect of a microscope seeking out bacteria in a culture, Rupert Croft-Cooke inspects the lives of Swinburne, John Addinton Symonds, Oscar Wilde and many of their contemporaries and collaborators in pedastry, during the period from 1857, the year of Swinburne's meeting with the Pre-Raphaelites at Oxford, to 1895, the year of Oscar Wilde's trials. The study also briefly examines the lives of Lewis Carroll, Walter Pater, Edmund Gosse and other lesser artists.

The writer of today is made aware of his indebtedness to Oscar Wilde for much of the literary freedom which is his now. But the youth of today, especially those who are criticized for their bohemian existence, would certainly thank the author for providing them with a precedent for their behavior. At the same-time, they would probably hate him for denying them their originality and exposing them as imitators.

The only criticism worthy of mention, is the author's attitude, at times, to be judge, jury and analyst when considering the motives and thinking of the artists of whom he writes. Some persons may also take objection to his manner of dismissing the point of view of other authors who have tried, whether falsely or not, to project an image of the men who feasted with panthers.

CALVIN PREDDIE

Crime

THE PLAGUE OF SILENCE. By John Creasy. Ryerson; 188 pages; $4.95.

This is a suspense novel of terror and violence. The terror stems for a mysterious disease which an evil hand employs in a bid to control life and death at will. The violence comes into its own when Dr. Palfrey and his Z5 band resist the evil hand before the entire world is at its mercy with its plague bugs.

BHFC.

A Peek In A Stranger's Scrapbook

ALL THE THINGS WE WERE. By Louise Tanner. Doubleday; 362 pages, $7.50.

The years between the depression and the war are the rage. "Bonnie and Clyde" movies, mid-calf dress lengths, Camp art all reflect the times. Why not a book?

"All the Things We Were" is a collection of pictures and paragraphs about what was "in" in the years between 1931 and 1942.

Nostalgically, illustrations of "Gasoline Alley" separate the chapters. The first chapter finds Sheezix left on Uncle Walt's door step in a basket. The last chapter shows him as a grandfather.

Photographs include Wrong Way Corrigan with his airplane and J. P. Morgan with a midget on his knee.

The topics range from comic strips to movies. The title alone is enough to make any person who lived through the '30s grab the book from the shelf.

But reading "All the Things We Were" is like looking at someone else's scrap book. Someone who was a little younger, who had a different group of friends and different tastes.

Pages are spent on comic strips and radio programs. So documented are they by research material that one wonders if the author really knew Punjab and Daddy Warbucks or listened to —

"Arf' says Sandy".

Detailed accounts are given

LOUISE TANNER

about Fred Astair and Ginger Rogers in "Flying Down To Rio", but not once is the dancethon of the 30s embellished.

Breadlines are referred to, but without the feeling and knowing that the man who begged for food at your back door had never begged before and was really hungry.

Factual evidence is pasted together about what music was popular, which movies were good, with psychological explanations of escapism. Russ Columbo, Paul Whiteman and Guy Lombardo were brushed over in favor of Benny Goodman.

In a review of the musical theatre in the thirties, those two youngsters who made a success of their first musical, Richard Rogers and Lorenze Mart were completely forgotten.

The book touches enough tender spots to stir up memories. But, like another person's scrap book, pages and pages are merely quick snapshots of incidences and people that never touched one's life.

The book is devoid of feeling of the era, and nostalgia and sentiment are left for the reader to conjure up himself.

The book is adequate if you simply want to be reminded of trivia that has long faded into the past. From this point of view, it is great fun.

But if you want to recapture the mood, the living, the tenderness of those confusing days, your own memory will do a better job. You'll have to rely on it anyway.

As for the book explaining this era and the motivations of the 30s to our progeny, God help our image. "All the Things We Were" won't help a bit.

WINI RIDER

Leonard Cohen's New Venture

By JUAN RODRIGUEZ

"James Joyce is not dead... He lives in Montreal under the name of Leonard Cohen," shrieks the publicity for his début recording. For Cohen, recording is just another thing to occupy one's time with, and for a man of such comparative youth (thirty-two) he has done an amazing variety of things: four volumes of poetry, two novels, music for films, appearances in the same films. Now, after almost a year of planning, recording, composing, destroying, re-recording, mulling over and dilly—dally, Columbia Records has released his album, simply titled "Songs of Leonard Cohen. Nowhere on the disc's jacket is there an indication as to how many and which songs are included inside, and the cover photo (taken by a machine one would likely find in bus terminals and variety stores) pictures Cohen merely brooding at his audience. This all seems to be a part of the grand "build-up". It is now quite clear that, whether he likes it or not, Leonard Cohen has become a powerful new folk figure for today's young music audience. There are already over 250,000 copies of his Beautiful Losers in print in the United States. Major articles on Cohen have recently appeared in a slew of American periodicals, including the New York Times and Harper's. His young audience continues to grow, as well as picking up a few serious "fans" here and there.

However, "the voice of a beautiful mind", as Columbia terms it, is a soft, flat, feeble, monotonous warble. It is clear that Cohen is neither a singer nor a musician, yet that void is not the root cause of the badness of this record. Cohen has unfortunately been recorded with the grossest kind of modern pop accompaniment. Whatever merit his lyrics may contain is completely overshadowed by flurries of mandolins, harpsichords, random electric guitars,bongoes, and a chorus that sounds as if it emanated from a bevy of anxious high school cheerleaders. The result is that Cohen's often tender and frail little lyrics, some of them quite unusual and touching, merely sound like embarrassing interruptions. Cohen reminds one of a child prodigy singing in front of the New York Philharmonic.

The current trend in pop music dictates excessive orchestration. A record's success, it seems, is now determined by the number of instruments one can synthesize into a popular song. The end product is that we have been faced, in recent months, with a barrage of pompous, pretentious, vulgar and banal pop records. It is into this spectrum that Leonard Cohen — the normally quiet and sensitive poet — has been tossed. The urge to make Cohen a "big star" has transcended the barriers of good taste. Many agonizing hours were spent on the album by Cohen, a man completely unfamiliar with the recording studio, and all that is left seems to indicate a hastily put-together dud.

"I think my album is going to be very spotty and undistinguished," Cohen said recently to New York's Village Voice. "They tried to make my songs into music. I got put down all the time." So convincingly did he get put down, that one wonders whether Cohen offered any resistance at all.

LEONARD COHEN

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P.S.: As for the polar bear cookbook, it's called the NORTHERN COOKBOOK, and its 358 pages cost a modest $2.75 paperback or $4.50 hardcover. Written by Eleanor A. Ellis for wilderness wives, it's a knock-out gift for the woman who thinks she knows all there is to know about cooking.

The Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition

announces that THOMAS NELSON & SONS (Canada) Limited of Toronto and Montreal has been selected to publish **EXPO 67 Canada,** *The Memorial Album.*

In design and scope this 368 page book will reflect the spirit of EXPO, a daringly conceived and imaginatively executed fair that was the crowning achievement of our Centennial year.

As a tribute to the many people who participated in it and the millions who enjoyed it, EXPO proudly presents a handsome bilingual publication containing 100 full colour photographs, over 300 black and white illustrations — and a wealth of happy memories.

EXPO 67 Canada will be published on October 15.

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